Revolt of T.S. Eliot against Wordsworthian tendencies in nineteenth century poetry

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THE REVOLT OF T. S. ELIOT
AGAINST WORDSWORTHIAN TENDENCIES
IN NINETEENTH CENTURY POETRY

by

Charles Hilton

Presented in partial fulfillment of the
requirement for the degree of
Master of Arts.

State University of Montana

1936

Approved:

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Chairman of Examining Committee

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INTRODUCTION

Now that Harvard University has bestowed the Charles Eliot Norton professorship of poetry upon that "most enigmatic of her sons", and now that the waters of literature are again troubled, if, indeed, they have ever been quite still since 1917, by the appearance of his newest book, "Selected Essays", Thomas Stearns Eliot is no unsuitable, nor will he prove an unfruitful subject for serious study. The Chair to which Mr. Eliot succeeds was filled with distinction by John Livingston Lowes and Gilbert Murray, and we may look forward to the year of Mr. Eliot's occupancy as one likely to bring forth, if not precisely an academic work, at least one which may enrich the poetic thought of the modern world.

The birth of Thomas Stearns Eliot, which occurred in the city of St. Louis, Missouri, in the year 1888, was not heralded as it will most probably one day be. He came into the world quietly as befitted the son of Henry Ware Eliot, a gentleman who could boast of Puritan ancestry and a re-

It was published by H. Cohen-Sander (T. Thames.

Mr. J. S. Year has written an introduction to this work.

In 1914, Exe, now with two master's degrees, Mr.

Sorbonne; and later to study at Merton College, Oxford.

he received the master's degree in 1910; the following year he received the master's degree in 1909, and the

from which he received the bachelor's degree in 1909, and the

accordance with the traditions of his family, entered Harvard,

most of which was completed in the middle west. Exe, in

After the usual run of secondary schooling,

mother, Charlotte Channing milk, was the author of a dream,

introduced to the since famous Charles M. Kittel. Milk
his first book of verse, *Prufrock and Other Observations*; in 1920 the same book, with a few additional poems, was brought out in America under the simple title, *Poems*; *The Waste Land* followed in 1922, having first appeared in *The Criterion*, and later, in *The Dial*, receiving *The Dial*’s annual award for the year’s most distinguished contribution to letters. A collected edition of his poems, *Poems 1909-1925*, appeared in New York and in London in 1926, and his last important contribution to poetry, *Ash Wednesday*, was brought out, again in both cities, in 1930. In the meantime he published the following important books of essays: *The Sacred Wood* (1920), *Homage to John Dryden* (1924), *For Lancelot Andrews*, (1928), and *Selected Essays* (1932).

Mr. Eliot married Miss Vivienne Haigh-Wood of London. In 1927 he became a British citizen, and later joined the Anglo Catholic Church. Although Mr. Eliot has been somewhat of an enfant terrible to his generation, standing up heroically against ideas which he considered wrong, and to men he considered sham, he has been extremely reticent, almost shy about his private life, with the result that it is ex-

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7. Faber & Gwyer, London.
tremely difficult to find any but a few bare facts about it. He is described by Alfred Kreymborg, who visited him in his London apartment, in these meagre words: "The man was beau-
tiful to look at as well as to listen to, and one could readily
give credence to the rumor that he had become the idol of
the most exclusive set in Mayfair." Restraint and good
manners seem to be the key-notes of the man's personality,
both in literature and in private life. But even in the
idolatry and glamour of Mayfair the perception which makes
him the poet he is does not seem to have deserted him: when
asked by an impressed American visitor if he did not think
the party they were attending interesting, he replied, "Yes,
if you concentrate on the essential horror of the thing."

One of the longest and most complete descriptions of
the man's personality is given to us by Carey McWilliams,
who met Eliot during his recent, and first, trip to Southern
California, where he delivered several lectures, at Pomona
College, the University of California, Los Angeles, and the
University of Southern California.

I heard only one of Mr. Eliot's lectures in
Southern California—that on "Edward Lear and
Modern Poetry", delivered at the University of
Southern California, January 9. Before a rather
small audience of young ladies hugging copies of
his volumes, pallidly wistful English instructor-
esses, and a few incurably literary gentlemen,
Mr. Eliot launched his lecture. He is rather
dandome in appearance, younger than his years
would indicate. He is a very formal person, and
his manner is somewhat reserved. His experience
as a lecturer in extension university courses in London has stood him in good stead, for he lectures in a practical manner. His speech is semi-conversational; he speaks slowly, with frequent repetitions and constantly accumulated emphasis. Occasionally he gives evidence of a slight, deprecatory wit, but for the most part he seems steeped in a sense of his own seriousness.

After the lecture Mr. Eliot read from his works.

In reading selections from his poems, he conveyed a very distinct and memorable impression. He read the passage called "The Burial of the Dead" from "The Waste Land", beginning with these lines,

April is the cruellest month, breeding
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
Memory and desire, stirring
Dull roots with spring rain.

He reads rather in the manner of Robinson Jeffers, that is, in a monotone. But he manages to convey a difference in emphasis by slight variations in tone. For instance, he reads the leading lines with a slightly heightened emphasis, and the seemingly irrelevant asides are hurried over, as though they were merely incongruous thoughts that had obtruded themselves momentarily in his thinking.

He sums up the experience:

Both in listening to his reading and watching him while reading, one gains an impression of the exceptionally personal quality of his thought and experience. There is a somewhat sanctified, cloistered (might I be permitted to say "anglican"?) quality about the whole performance that savors slightly of the theatrical. There is almost a ministerial reserve about his manner, as though he were reading from a pulpit. I kept thinking all the time he was reading, why, this is a priest reciting mass, or mumbling his prayer half audibly. The impression is so distinctly conveyed that I think it must be calculated and deliberate. I do recall one striking think that he said: "Perhaps, in essence, poetry is nothing but incantation." And he reads as though he believed this to be true.
This, then, is a picture of the man, who, perhaps more than any other, has stirred the literary thought and bids fair to transform the poetical conceptions of his generation. He is not alone in this task, to be sure, but he is a leader; and one of the few figures of any considerable dimension who have blocked themselves out, at least in crude outlines, against the somber background of, as he believes, our dying civilization. The work of T. S. Eliot is significant; he has something to say of his generation and to his generation which is of permanent value; a something which will repay careful study. It is, of course, precarious, even dangerous to make an estimate of a living figure, especially a figure such as Eliot, whose work if not exactly in flux, is at least in progression. Each succeeding book of poems which has come from his hand has marked a more or less decided, and not always predictable, change in his point of view; though in retrospect his work takes on more unity than a casual reader is at first willing to suppose. As Mr. Kreymborg points out in Our Singing Strength, Eliot will probably affect the course of English poetry more through his prose diata than through his poetry.

But Mr. Eliot is accomplishing something definite

in poetry. It is decidedly fresh, and in a way, startlingly new, and has helped to clear the ground for a new period in English poetry. As an anonymous critic of the Manchester Guardian has observed, a decided parallel might be drawn between the poetry of Wordsworth at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and the poetry of Eliot at the beginning of the twentieth. It has been observed by critics, Ezra Pound, George Williamson, Edmund Wilson, Rene Taupin, Richard Aldington, Allen Tate, and others, that Eliot is a poet in "revolt". It is the object of this paper to draw up a comparison between the poetic theory and practice of Wordsworth and the poetic theory and practice of Eliot in order to determine whether there are enough differences between the works of Eliot and Wordsworth to justify the view that Eliot is a poet in "revolt". The poetry of Wordsworth has long been considered as revolting against the neo-classicism of the eighteenth century poetry. By comparing the poetry of Eliot and the poetry of Wordsworth upon those points upon which Wordsworth revolted against the neo-classicism of the eighteenth century, as set forth in his preface to the Lyrical Ballads, we may come to some conclusions as to the nature of Eliot's revolt. As Wordsworth set the dominant tradition in the poetry of the nineteenth century, we may come to some understanding of what Eliot is revolting against.
If, then, as has been suggested in the introduction, Mr. Eliot stands somewhat in relation to our age as Wordsworth did to his, it might be well to pause and take some notice of the poetic theory of the two men, and particularly Wordsworth's theory as set forth in the Preface to the Lyrical Ballads, "Poetry as a Study", and "Poetic Diction". Mr. Eliot's accumulating poetic theory is scattered throughout his splendid essays, particularly those dealing with the poets, such as Dryden, Andrew Marvell, Swinburne, and such purely theoretical essays as "Tradition and the Individual Talent", "Introduction to the Poems of Ezra Pound", and the "Introduction to Johnson's London and the Vanity of Human Wishes".

The four main points upon which Wordsworth set himself in revolt against the neo-classicism and the decadent neo-classic abuses of the eighteenth century poets, are summed up in the following passage.

The principal object, then, proposed in these Poems was to choose incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or describe them, throughout, as far as was possible in selection of language really used by men, and, at the same time, to throw over them a certain colouring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the
mind in an unusual aspect; and, further, and above all, to make these incidents and situations interesting by tracing in them, truly though not ostentatiously, the primary laws of our nature: chiefly, as far as regards the manner in which we associate ideas in a state of excitement. Humble and rustic life was generally chosen, because, in that condition, the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language; because in that condition of life our elementary feelings co-exist in a state of greater simplicity, and, consequently, may be more accurately contemplated, and more forcibly communicated; because the manners of rural life germinate from those elementary feelings and, from the necessary character of rural occupations, are more easily comprehended, and are more durable; and, lastly, because in that condition the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of Nature. The language, too, of these men has been adopted (purified indeed from what appears to be its real defects, from all lasting and rational causes of dislike or disgust) because men hourly communicate with the best objects from which the best part of language is originally derived; and because, from their rank in society and the sameness and narrow circle of their intercourse, being less under the influence of social vanity, they convey their feelings and notions in simple and unelaborated expressions. Accordingly, such a language, arising out of repeated experience and regular feelings, is a more permanent, and a far more philosophical, language, than that which is frequently substituted for it by Poets, who think that they are conferring honour upon themselves and their art, in proportion as they separate themselves from the sympathies of men, and indulge in arbitrary and capricious habits of expression, in order to furnish food for fickle tastes, and fickle appetites of their own creation. 13

\[fios^{†}\]

From this paragraph we see, that Wordsworth set about to accomplish in his poetry four quite definite things.

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First, he proposed to choose his incidents and situations which made up his poems from common life; second, to describe these situations in "selections of language really used by men"; third, to throw over these situations and incidents a "certain colouring of the imagination" which would present them in "an unusual aspect" and, fourth, he proposed to make these situations and incidents "interesting by tracing in them, truly, though not ostentatiously, the primary laws of our nature. Also, Wordsworth believed that the common man, or, as he more specifically states, the rustic, forms a richer ground in which the essential passions of the heart may mature than the educated man. And thirdly, he believed that poets who did not adhere to the common speech, and who expressed themselves in an intellectualized or ornate style, were somehow missing their high calling as poets.

Let us turn now to a consideration of some of the problems of poetry upon which both Eliot and Wordsworth have expressed views.

First among these problems, both from the standpoint of logic, and from the standpoint of difficulty, is to determine what poetry really is. It was Wordsworth's view that poetry is the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings". He believed that it took its "origins from emotion recollected
in tranquility". He further stated, "the emotion is contemplated till, by a species of reactions, the tranquility gradually disappears, and an emotion, kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind". Eliot's views on this point are less easy to define. In the first place Eliot has a little more subtle mind than Wordsworth had. Eliot sees poetry "as the living whole of all poetry that has ever been written". He is willing to conceive of poetry as an abstraction, or quality which exists in the sense in which Plato's forms, or universals, have been believed to exist. From this position he descends to define poetry, or we may imply that he does, for I have yet to find a passage in which he has attempted a direct definition, as a record, a highly selected one, of emotions and feelings. He views the mind of the poet as a sort of catalytic agent.

The experience, you will notice, the elements which enter the presence of the transforming catalyst, are of two kinds: emotions and feelings. The effect of a work of art upon the person who enjoys it is an experience different in kind from any experience not of art. It may be formed out of one emotion, or may be combined of several; and various feelings, inhering from the writer in particular words or phrases or images, may be added to compose the final result. Or great

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15. Ibid.
poetry may be made without the direct use of any emotion whatever: composed out of feelings solely. 17

Eliot's distinction between emotions and feelings, although he makes no attempt to make his distinction particularly clear, is a distinction which Wordsworth's less subtle mind does not make, and which, in a sense, sets Eliot definitely apart from Wordsworth. Eliot attempts to illustrate his distinction by citing 18 the fifteenth canto of the Inferno, the one which deals with the poet's meeting with his old master, Brunetto Latini, which canto, as a whole, is "a working up of the emotion evident in the situation". He hints at what he means by "feeling" in citing the last quatrain of the canto. "Then he turned, and seemed like one of those who run for the green cloth a Verona through the open field; and of them he seemed like him who wins, and not like him who loses". Of this quatrain he remarks, "The last quatrain gives an image, a feeling attached to an image, which 'came', which did not develop simply out of what precedes, but which was probably in suspension in the poet's mind until the proper combination arrived for it to add itself to". 19

Wordsworth and Eliot, however different their words, are in accord on one point: that poetry has its basis in experience, for how can there be an "emotion" or "powerful

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19. Perhaps this passage, and Eliot's comment upon it cast (Cont.)
feeling" which is not also an experience. They both seem to believe that the emotion which finds its way into the poem differs from the original emotion which produced the poem, in that it has been selected, and, shall we say refined in the process of creation. Wordsworth stresses, as we have seen in our last quotation from the "Preface" that the emotion - - -

(Cont.) some light upon his distinction between "emotion" and "feeling":

And now methings I could e'en chide myself
For deating on her beauty, though her death
Shall be regained after no common action.
Does the silkworm expend her yellow labours
For thee? For thee does she undo herself?
Are lordships sold to maintain ladyships
For the poor benefit of a bewildering minute?
Why does your fellow falsify highways,
And put his life between the judge's lips,
To refine such a thing—keeps horse and men
To beat their valours from her?

"In this passage (as is evident if it is taken in its context)
there is a combination of positive and negative emotions: an
intensely strong attraction toward beauty and an equally
intense fascination by the ugliness which is contrasted with
it and which destroys it. This balance of contrasted emotions is
in the dramatic situation to which the speech is pertinent,
but that situation alone is inadequate to it. This is, so
to speak, the structural emotion, provided by the drama. But
the whole effect, the dominant tone, is due to the fact that
a number of floating feelings, having affinity to this emotion
by no means superficially evident, have combined with it to
give it a new art emotion. (Tradition and Individual Talent,
Selected Essays, p. 9)

Again he notes:
The episode of Paolo and Francesca employs a definite
emotion, but the intensity of the poetry is something quite
different from whatever intensity in the supposed experience
it may give the impression of. It is no more intense,
Furthermore, than Canto XXVI, the voyage of Ulysses, which
was"kindred" to that which before existed, or the original emotion, and Eliot stresses the impersonality of the emotions which compose a work of poetic art.

It is not in his personal emotions, the emotions provoked by particular events in his life, that the poet is in any way remarkable or interesting. His particular emotions may be simple, or crude, or flat. The emotion in his poetry will be a very complex thing, but not with the complexity of the emotions of people who have very complex or unusual emotions in life. One error, in fact, of eccentricity in poetry is to seek for new human emotions to express; and in this search for novelty in the wrong place it discovers the perverse. The business of the poet is not to find new emotions, but to use the ordinary ones, and, in working them up into poetry, to express feelings which are not in actual emotions at all. And emotions which he has never experienced will serve his turn as well as those familiar to him.

From this position he proceeds to criticize Wordsworth.

Consequently, we must believe that "emotion recollected in tranquility" is an inexact formula. For it is neither emotion, nor recollection, not, without distortion of meaning, tranquility. It is concentration, and a new thing resulting from the concentration, of a very great number of experiences which to the practical and active person would not seem to be experiences at all; it is a concentration which does not happen consciously or of deliberation. These experiences are not recollected, and they finally unite in an atmosphere which is "tranquil" only in that it is a passive attending upon the event. Of course, this is not the whole story. There is a great deal, in writing of poetry, which must be conscious and deliberate. In fact, the bad poet is usually unconscious where he ought to be conscious, and conscious where he ought to be unconscious. Both errors tend to make him personal.

(cont.)

has not the direct dependence upon an emotion. . . . The ode of Keats contains a number of feelings which have nothing particular to do with the nightingale, but which the nightingale, partly, perhaps, because of its attractive name, and partly because of its reputation, served to bring together.

Again Eliot stresses the point that poetry is not a record of personal emotion.

Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality. But, of course, only those who have personality and emotions know what it means to want to escape from these things.  

From these excerpts we see Eliot's belief that the personal emotions of the poet are of very little interest in any consideration of what poetry really is, indeed, he stresses the fact at the end of the first excerpt that an "emotion which he has never experienced" will serve him as well in the composition of poetry as one which is "familiar to him". He further stresses the fact that the "emotion" which composes the poem is compounded of many complex experiences which are likely to resemble neither the experience which forms the basis of the poem, nor the artistic emotion which the reader experiences. He criticizes Wordsworth's formula for poetry on the grounds that it is "neither emotion, nor recollection, nor without distortion, tranquility", but that poetry is a "concentration and a new thing resulting from the concentration of a very great number of experiences", which might not seem to the practical person experiences at all. He further stresses the fact that poetry is "not a turning loose of emotion", but an escape from both emotion and personality.

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22. Ibid.
From these views of the nature of poetry, it would be interesting, if not logical, to turn to a study of what these men believed the function of the poet himself. Eliot, as we have already stated, seems to look upon the poet as a sort of catalytic agent. He likens the poet's mind to the shred of platinum which must be present in order that "the two gases" may form sulphurous acid. 23 "The mind of the poet is the shred of platinum. It may partly or exclusively operate upon the experience of the man himself; but, the more perfect the artist, the more completely separate in him will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates; the more perfectly will the mind digest and transmute the passions which were its material". He states further: "The poet's mind is in fact a receptacle for seizing and storing up innumerable feelings, images, which remain there until all the particles which can unite to form a new compound are present together". 24 And again, "the poet has, not a 'personality' to express, but a particular medium, which is only a medium and not a personality, in which impressions and experiences combine in peculiar and unexpected ways. Impressions and experiences which are important for the man may take no place in the poetry, and those which become important in the poetry may play quite a negligible part in the man, the personality." 25

In his "Introduction" to Ezra Pound's Selected Poems, Mr. Eliot

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24. Ibid, p. 8
25. Ibid, p. 9
has noted: 26

The poet's progress is dual. There is the gradual accumulation of experience, like a tactual jar; it may be only once in five or ten years that experience accumulates to form a new whole and finds its appropriate expression. . . . The development of experience is largely unconscious, subterranean, so that we cannot gauge its progress except once in every five or ten years. . . . The poet who wishes to continue to write poetry must keep in training; and must do this, not by forcing his inspiration, but by good workmanship on a level possible for some hours work every week of his life.

Mr. Eliot defines the poet's experience: "By experience I mean the results of reading and reflection, varied interests of all sorts, contacts and acquaintances, as well as passion and adventure." Thus, we are able to form some picture of Mr. Eliot's idea of the poet. He views him as an impersonal catalytic agent, compounding experience into poetry in somewhat a mechanicistic manner.

In the opening paragraph of "Of Poetry as Observation and Description" Wordsworth notes:

The powers requisite for the production of poetry are: first, those of Observation and Description,—i.e., the ability to observe with accuracy things as they are in themselves, and with fidelity to describe them, unmodified by any passion or feeling existing in the mind of the describer; whether the things depicted be actually present to the senses, or have a place only in the memory. Secondly, Sensibility,—which, the more exquisite it is, the wider will be the range of a poet's perceptions; and the more will he be invited to observe objects, both as they exist in themselves, and as reacted upon by his own mind. Thirdly, Reflection,—which makes the Poet acquainted with

Faber & Gwyer, London, 1728.
the value of actions, images, thoughts, and feelings; and assists the sensibility in perceiving their connection with each other. Fourthly, Imagination and Fancy,—to modify, to create, and to associate. Fifthly, Invention,—by which characters are composed out of materials supplied by observation; whether of the Poet's own heart and mind, or of external life and nature; and such incidents and situations produced as are most impressive to the imagination, and most fitted to do justice to the characters, sentiments, and passions, which the Poet undertakes to illustrate. And, lastly, Judgment,—to decide where, and in what degree, each of these faculties ought to be exerted. . . . By judgment, also, is determined what are the laws and appropriate graces of every species of composition.

But in no thing could Eliot and Wordsworth diverge more completely than in their views of the poet.

What is a Poet? To whom does he address himself? And what language is to be expected from him?—He is a man speaking to men: a man, it is true, endowed with more lively sensibilities, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind; a man pleased with his own passions and volitions, and who rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life that is in him; delighting to contemplate similar volitions and passions as manifested in the goings-on of the Universe, and habitually impelled to create them where he does not find them. To these qualities he has added a disposition to be affected more than other men by absent things as if they were present; an ability of conjuring up in himself passions, which are indeed far from being the same as those produced by real events, yet (especially in those parts of the general sympathy which are pleasing and delightful) do more nearly resemble the passions produced by real events, than anything which, from the motions of their own minds merely, other men are accustomed to feel in themselves;—whence from practice, he has acquired a greater readiness and power in expressing what he thinks and feels, and especially

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those thoughts and feelings which, by his own choice, or from the structure of his own mind, arise in him without immediate external excitement.*

Such are Wordsworth's views of the qualifications of the true poet. Mr. Eliot would be inclined to accept some of Wordsworth's postulates, such as sensibility, a term which he employs in such essays as "Shakespeare", "Dante", "John Dryden", "The Metaphysical Poets", and "Andrew Marvell". In these and other critical writings Eliot also uses the terms "reflection" and "judgment", but he uses them without definition. We may infer, also, from our discussion up to this point, that Eliot would agree with the spirit of objectivity which Wordsworth sets forth in his notes, "observation and description", and especially with the seeing clearly of objects "unmodified by any passion or feeling existing in the mind of the describer". But there are decided differences. For instance, to Eliot, the poet is not merely a man speaking to men, but a man "expressing a medium". He has nothing to say to men as a man, for, as we have seen, his personal emotions are trivial and uninteresting. He is greatest as a poet when he is least personal, when he has most completely separated "the body which suffers and the mind which creates". The poet is not, as Wordsworth believes, a man "pleased with his own passions and volitions, and who rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life

that is in him" but a man seeking "escape from emotions", "an escape from personality". Eliot has noted: "The emotion of art is impersonal. And the poet cannot reach this impersonality without surrendering himself wholly to the work to be done". This theory of "impersonality" rules out the possibility of Eliot agreeing with Wordsworth's theory that the poet is a man "endowed... with enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul than is supposed to be common among mankind". All of these are purely personal attributes, and could have no place, or very little, in the impersonal emotion of art. But Wordsworth did feel that there was a difference between the emotions of people under the stress of experience, and those emotions as they are depicted in art, but he was less subtle in his analysis than Eliot, and never arrived at a clear distinction. Wordsworth notes in the last quotation that the passions which the poet conjures up in himself are "far from being the same as those produced by real events" but do. Wordsworth notes, "resemble the passions produced by real events" more than anything which men are accustomed to feel in themselves. Wordsworth's theory differs from Eliot's in as much as Wordsworth still stresses personality... the emotion which the poet conjures up in himself", whereas Eliot, voicing the same theory, stresses the poet's escape from personality.

A similar, though not so marked difference, follows the two poets in their considerations of the aims of poetry. Both Eliot and Wordsworth believed that poetry should primarily give pleasure: "The poet writes under one restriction only, namely, the necessity of giving immediate pleasure." Eliot in his expression of the idea uses the word "enjoy". "We cannot fully enjoy or rightly estimate a hundred years of English poetry unless we enjoy Dryden." It is from such statements that we must infer much of Eliot's theory. We conclude, therefore, that poetry should give enjoyment, or pleasure, to the reader, whatever else it may do; and in that, both Wordsworth and Eliot agree. In addition to this Wordsworth believed that poetry was a means of achieving profound spiritual truth, or at least truth which could be obtained in no other way. "Aristotle, I have been told, has said that Poetry is the most philosophical of all writing: it is so: its object is truth, not individual and local, but general, and operative; not standing upon external testimony, but carried alive into the heart by passion." Few things could be farther apart than these statements. Wordsworth has taken simplicity of language as an ideal, "the language really spoken by men". Mr. Eliot stresses

the fact that we live in a complex age, and that, as a result, our poetry must be complex, difficult, if it is to mean anything to us. He may even go as far as "to dislocate if necessary, language into his meaning". It is interesting to note that Wordsworth was as aware as Eliot that he was living in a complex age, but whereas Mr. Eliot enters into the complexity in a fearless manner, and attempts to build his poems therefrom, Wordsworth retreated from it and sought refuge in the country. He complained of an age which was victim of a "degrading thirst for outrageous stimulation". He accounted for it: "The most effective of these causes are the great national events which are daily taking place, and the increasing accumulation of men in cities, where the uniformity of their occupations produces a craving for extraordinary incidents, which the rapid communication of intelligence hourly satisfies". Eliot, as we shall see from a study of his poems, has entered into his city environment and has not sought, as did Wordsworth, into a country of hedgerows and elms.

In one respect, however, Wordsworth and Eliot, at least theoretically, have much in common: that is in their theory of the likeness of the language of poetry and prose. They both believe that there is no essential difference between the language of poetry and that of prose.
For whom, then, should poetry be written? Wordsworth answers the question: "Poets do not write for Poets alone, but for men. Unless we are advocates for that admiration which subsists upon ignorance, and that pleasure which arises from hearing what we do not understand, the poet must descend from this supposed height; and, in order to excite rational sympathy, he must express himself as other men express themselves". From this, we see that Wordsworth had in mind a universal audience, and set up for himself the ideal of an expression that would reach all men. Mr. Eliot, on the contrary, aims at a certain exclusiveness: "We can only say that it appears likely that poetry in our civilization, as it exists at present, must be difficult. Our civilization comprehends great variety and complexity, and this variety and complexity, playing upon a refined sensibility, must produce various complex results. The poet must become more and more comprehensive, more allusive, more indirect, in order to force, to dislocate if necessary, language into his meaning". 32

Mr. Eliot, as may be expected, has nothing to say of poetry as truth, and therein lies a difference, in emphasis at least, from the theory of Wordsworth. Poetry Eliot believes, should grow out of, and at the same time modify the poetry of the past. This idea springs quite naturally

from his doctrine of poetry as the living whole of all the poetry which has been written. "If we approach a poet without prejudice we shall often find that not only the best, but the most individual parts of his work may be those in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously. And I do not mean the impressionistic period of adolescence, but the period of full maturity." Again we quote Mr. Eliot:

To proceed to a more intelligible exposition of the relation of the poet to the past: he can neither take the past as a lump, an indiscriminate bolus, nor can he form himself wholly on one or two private admiralions, nor can he form himself wholly upon one preferred period. The first course is inadmissible, the second is an important experience of youth, and the third is a pleasant and highly desirable supplement. The poet must be very conscious of the main current, which does not at all flow invariably through the most distinguished reputations. He must be quite aware of the obvious fact that art never improves, but that the material of art is never quite the same. He must be aware that the mind of Europe—the mind of his own country—a mind which he learns in time to be much more important than his own private mind—is a mind which changes and which abandons nothing on men, which does not superannuate either Shakespeare, or Homer, or the rock drawing of the Magdalenian draughtsmen.

Thus we see that Eliot believes that originality in poetry occurs most truly when the dead poets, our ancestors, "assert their immortality most vigorously".

The second quotation is but a modification of the first.

33. Ibid, p. 5.
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important, in this study, perhaps, only in as much as it stresses again objectivity and impersonality. Mr. Eliot is willing to carry objectivity almost to the point of being fantastic, as the theory of the present modifying the past no doubt appears to a generation trained in the peculiar credulity of mechanistic, or should we say, scientific thought. Poetry, then, according to Mr. Eliot should have as one of its objectives, or aims, to put itself in tune with the national mind, both to grow out of, to modify the past. To Wordsworth on the contrary the chief aim in poetry was to convey truth through the personal appeal of the reader's passions. Wordsworth voices the theory in the "Preface to the Lyrical Ballads". "It may be safely affirmed, that there neither is, nor can be, any essential difference between the language of prose and metrical composition". And again, "some of the most interesting parts of the best poems will be found to be strictly the language of prose when prose is well written". Eliot voices his theory in the following manner:

Certain qualities are to be expected of any type of good verse at any time; we may say the qualities which good verse shares with good prose. Hardly any good poet in English has written bad prose; and some English poets have been among the greatest of English prose writers. The finest prose writer of Shakespeare's time was, I think, Shakespeare himself; Milton and
Dryden were among the greatest prose writers of their times.

Mr. Eliot, characteristically enough, subtilizes upon Wordsworth's point:

Only we ought to distinguish between poetry which is like good prose, and poetry which is like bad prose. And even so, I believe more prose is bad because it is like bad poetry than poetry is bad because it is like bad prose. And to have the virtues of good prose is the first and minimum requirement of good poetry.

But even when the subtilty is admitted, Eliot's position is still that of Wordsworth, "for poetry which is like good prose" in the exactness of its language, must exclude any essential difference between the language of prose and metrical composition.

In general, the difference between the poetic theories of Eliot and Wordsworth might be summed up in Eliot's phrase "an impersonal theory of poetry", for Eliot seeks to exclude from the composition of poetry all personality. Wordsworth, to be sure, seeks objectivity, but he does not exclude personality, either in theory or

er in practice, from the composition of his poems. To
Wordsworth a poet was "a man speaking to men"; to Eliot the
poet's mind acts upon experience, as a catalytic agent, pro-
ducing a poem, but, in an excellent poet, leaving as little
trace of itself as possible. It seems to have been utterly
beyond Wordsworth to conceive of poetry as the "living whole
of all the poetry that has ever been written". Wordsworth
went to nature directly to find his poetry, and Eliot insists
upon the value of the poetic tradition, and the necessity of
the poet entering into this tradition in order to produce
poetry of the first order.
II THE CONTRAST BETWEEN ELIOT'S AND WORDSWORTH'S POETRY

If a contrast becomes apparent between the poetic theories of Eliot and Wordsworth, it is natural to expect such a contrast when put to use, to result in two rather different types of poetry, and an examination of the poetry itself reveals similar differences. There are many ways in which one might compare poetry, and many points upon which poetry might be compared, but for the purpose of this paper, we will compare the works of the two poets under the following headings: (1) the general appearance of the poetry, (2) the typical backgrounds of the poems, (3) the typical people, and, (4) the use of common objects in Eliot's poetry.

Upon a first approach, nothing could present a more striking contrast than a typical poem by Eliot and one by Wordsworth. A typical poem by Wordsworth is lucid, and capable, providing the reader has a knowledge of English, of yielding up its meaning immediately. To Wordsworth the poet is "a man speaking to men". And it causes us little wonder when we find him writing: "Poets do not write for Poets alone, but for men. Unless therefore we are advocates for that admiration which subsists upon ignorance, and that pleasure which arises from hearing what we do not understand, the poet must descend from his supposed height; and, in order
to excite rational sympathy, he must express himself as other men express themselves.\footnote{37} This, of course, as Coleridge has pointed out, Wordsworth did not always do, but he set it up as an ideal. When he departed from it, he still remained within the realm of logical syntax; and any difficulty in understanding Wordsworth arises from a difficulty of thought rather than from any confusion, or essential unclarity of expression. The little poem "The Tables Turned" is typical of Wordsworth's early work:

Up! Up! my Friend, and quit your books;  
Or surely you'll grow double;  
Up! Up! my friend, and clear your looks;  
Why all this toil and trouble?

The sun, above the mountain's head,  
A freshening lustre mellow  
Through all the long green fields has spread  
His first sweet evening yellow.

Books! 'tis a dull and endless strife:  
Come, hear the woodland linnet,  
How sweet his music is my life;  
There's more of wisdom in it.

And hark! how blithe the throstle sings!  
He, too, is no mean preacher:  
Come forth into the light of things,  
Let nature be your teacher.

She has a world of ready wealth,  
Our minds and hearts to bless—  
Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health  
Truth breathed by cheerfulness.

One impulse of a vernal wood  
May teach us more of man,  
Of moral evil and of good,  
Than all the sages can.

Sweet is the lore which nature brings
Our meddling intellect
Misshapes the beauteous forms of things:
We murder to dissect.

Enough of Science and of Art;
Close up those barren leaves;
Come forth, and bring with you a heart
That watches and receives.

Here we see the personal note which is inseparable from most
of Wordsworth's poems. He is, even in his most objective
moments, a man speaking to men.

Mr. Eliot, as would be expected, is seldom personal in
his poetry, and, although it does not necessarily follow from
his impersonal theory of poetry, his poems seldom yield up
their meaning to the ordinary reader without commentary. He
believes, as we have pointed out in the last chapter, that
poetry in our complex and essentially disorganized age, should
reflect that disorder and complexity—"The poet must become
more and more comprehensive, more allusive, more indirect
in order to force, to dislocate if necessary, language into
his meaning." It is little to be wondered, therefore, if
the general aspect of his poems is most puzzling to the
unsophisticated reader. "Sweeney Among the Nightingales"
is typical of Eliot's poetry:

Apeneck Sweeney spreads his knees
Letting his arms hang down to laugh,
The zebra stripes along his jaw
Swelling to maculate giraffe.
The Circles of the stormy moon
Slide westward toward the River Plate,
Death and the Raven drift above
And Sweeney guards the horned gate.

Gloomy Orian and the Dog
Are veiled; and hushed the shrunken seas;
The person in the Spanish cape
Tries to sit on Sweeney's knees.

Slips and pulls the table cloth
Overturns a coffee-cup,
Reorganized upon the floor
She yawns and draws a stocking up;

The silent man in mocha brown
Sprawls at the window-sill and gapes;
The waiter brings in oranges
Bananas figs and hothouse grapes;

The silent vertebrate in brown
Contracts and concentrates, withdraws;
Rabbi nee Rabinovitch
Tears at the grapes with murderous paws;

She and the lady in the cape
Are suspect, thought to be in league;
Therefore the man with heavy eyes
Declines the gambit, shows fatigue.

Leaves the room and reappears
Outside the window, leaning in,
Branches of wisteria
Circumscribe a golden grin;

The host with someone indistinct
Converses at the door apart,
The nightingales are singing near
The convent of the Sacred Heart,

And sang within the bloody wood
When Agamemnon cried aloud,
And let their liquid sighings fall
To stain the stiff dishonoured shroud.

If, upon a first reading, especially a first reading
of Eliot, the reader gets a very clear picture of the scene
it is describing he is clever. The first thing which
is likely to become intelligible to him, or force it-
self upon his attention, are certain phrases, vivid
and alive, but bearing, as far as he can see, little
fundamental relationship to one another. Certain des-
criptive passages next obtrude themselves upon his notice,
but, like the phrases, they seemingly are unrelated. He
may struggle through the poem many times before the literal
meaning, or "plain sense", as Prof. R. D. Jameson, following
the terminology of Ogden and Richards, is apt to put it,
becomes clear to him. This is Professor Jameson's explanation
of the poem.

The scene is laid in some small tavern,
presumably near the sea and certainly not far
from a Convent of the Sacred Heart. The
characters are Sweeney who appears frequently
in Mr. Eliot's compositions and whom Mr. Eliot
regards with some envy and much distrust, and
suspicion, two or more prostitutes—one of whom
is called Rachel and the other is the person in
the Spanish cape, perhaps Dusty or Doris, (see
"Sweeney Erect"), a silent man in mocha brown,
a waiter and a host. It is spring, for the wisteria
are in blossom. The action is of the
slightest. Sweeney spreads his knees; lets his
arms hang down and laughs. (Lines 1-4) The
girls in the cape tries to sit on his lap, fails,
falls to the floor. A waiter brings in fruit
which Rachel eats. A man (the "man with heavy
eyes" and perhaps the same as "the silent vertebrate
in brown") leaves the room and looks back through
the wisteria blossoms that hang over the window.
He has one or several gold teeth. There is a
murmur of voices as the host talks with some
unknown person. The tone is that of an impersonal
report which may be seen to have significance
later. 35

Upon the eight lines,

The circles of the stormy moon
Slide westward toward the River Plate
Death and the Raven drift above,
And Sweeney guards the horned gate.

Glomey Orion and the Dog
Are veiled; and hushed the shrunken seas;
The person in the Spanish cape
Tries to sit on Sweeney's knees...

Professor Jameson hazards the following comment:

It is a stormy night and the moon is reflected in
the sea in circles which move westward. The storm
clouds are black, they are like ravens, the symbols of
death. They drift across the sky and Sweeney guards
the horned gate, the gate, perhaps, of "Death's dream
kingdom", and perhaps the gate of physical passion,
which leads to a life that Mr. Eliot appears to equate
with death. The constellations of Orion and the Dog
are hidden by the clouds. The sea is at low tide and
at low tide too are all these things associated with
the sea by Mr. Eliot: Phlebas, the drowned man, death
by water, defunctive music under sea and the like.
There comes a momentary hush in the beating of the
waves. In this setting the poem proceeds to a description
in the language and manner of prose of a wasted evening,
in sharp contrast to the last six lines:

"The nightingales are singing near
The Convent of the Sacred Heart,

And sang within the bloody wood
When Agamemnon cried aloud
And let their liquid sighings fall
To stain the stiff dishonoured shroud."

where Feeling again takes control of the poem to carry
it to a magnificent conclusion, all the more splendid
when we remember that Agamemnon the Greek hero was
murdered by his adulterous wife and make comparisons
between the hero Agamemnon and the dull vice of
Sweeney and his companions.

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39. Ibid.
Ann Wadesworth is the only noted exception.

—

underway, and it is little wonder that we find further
rural, even though the industrialization of society was well
England, and the world for that matter, were predominately
review of Wordsworth's poems. In the days of Wordsworth,
Ricketts is worthy of note. Nature and the country are
Wordsworth's poems, and the almost complete absence in
In contrasting the two poems, the presence of nature in

Then all the ages can
Of moral evil and of good;
May teach us more of man
One language of a tender mood

In the dissection

Are strange, or strange wisdom out of personal experience. He
especially in his earlier poems, is often preached,
Wordsworth, expressed in the last exhibition of "Sweany". Wordsworth,
though the mean of a symbol such as the one which is
direct preaching, and what little comment he makes, he manages
Annoy! Ricketts often score to make any comment, and to do so...

Any one of Ricketts' poems with the situation of the poem.
Works of "Illy My Friend", and quite your book! to better
situation, but there is nothing in the poem, such as Wordsworth
himself may or may not have been a protagonist in a similar
in the poem grow directly out of the poem itself, and Ricketts
in "The Tables Turned", all of the emotions and feelings
"Sweany" in any direct or expository way, as did Wordsworth's
Mr. Ricketts' personality does not emerge clearly in
scenes and rustic characters predominating in Wordsworth's poetry. Since Wordsworth's day the tone and temper of modern society have changed, and our civilization has become more and more industrialized, and consequently urbanized. Wordsworth felt the processes of industrialization going on about him, and felt at the same time, as we have pointed out in the last chapter, that the processes contained much that would destroy and degrade men's finer sensibilities; but the process has gone on, none the less, and it is not surprising to find that the typical figure in our age has replaced, in Eliot's poems, the typical figure in Wordsworth's, the rustic. There is no mention of the rustic in any of Eliot's poetry; nor is there any mention of nature except when its use is necessary to the design of a symbol or the background of the poem. Thus in "Sweeney Among the Nightingales" we find a cloudy night at low tide described:

Circles of the stormy moon
Slide westward toward the River Plate,

Gloomy Orion and the Dog
Are veiled; and hushed the shrunken seas;

Or, as in The Waste Land, where the aspects of nature are used, rather for their symbolical effect, than for any innate loveliness, or worthwhileness:

Here is no water but only rock
Rock and no water and the sandy road
The road winding among the mountains
Which are mountains of rock without water.
Or as in "La Figlia Che Piange":

Stand on the highest pavement of the stair—
Lean on a garden urn—
Weave, weave the sunlight in your hair—
Clasp your flowers to you with a pained surprise—
Fling them to the ground and turn
With a fugitive resentment in your eyes:
But weave, weave the sunlight in your hair.....

where the aspects of nature called upon form rather a
symbolical background to reflect the mood, or feeling which
the poet wishes to convey, than existing as object in their
own right; even in the poem he observes:

She turned away, but with the autumn weather
Compelled my imagination many days,

The typical background of Eliot's poems is the city:
its streets, lodgings, pubs, parks and drawing-rooms. Of
London he notes:

The brown waves of fog toss up to me
Twisted faces from the bottom of the street.

And again,

Unreality
Under the brown fog of a winter dawn
A crowd flowed over London Bridge . . . .

And again, in "Rhapsody on a Windy Night",

Twelve o'clock
Along the reaches of the street

* * * *

Every street lamp that I pass
Beats like a fatalistic drum,
And from "Portrait of a Lady"

You will see me any morning in the park
Reading the comics and the sporting page...

In "Hysteria" he sets the scene in a restaurant:

An elderly waiter with trembling hands was
hurriedly spreading a pink and white checked
cloth over the rusty green iron table...

In "The Waste Land" he describes a drawing-room:

The chair she sat in, like a burnished throne,
Glowed on the marble, where the glass
 Held up by standards wrought with fruited vines
From which a golden Cupidon peeped out
(Another hid his eyes behind his wing)
 Doubled the flames of a seven branched candelabra
 Reflecting light upon the table as
The glitter of her jewels rose to meet it,
From satin cases poured in rich profusion;
In vials of ivory and coloured glass
Unstoppered, lurked her strange synthetic perfumes,
Unguent, powdered, or liquid—troubled, confused
And drowned the sense in odours; stirred by the air
That freshened from the window, these ascended
In fattenings the prolonged candle-flames,
Flung their smoke into the laqueria,
Stirring the pattern on the coffered ceiling,
Huge sea-wood fed with copper
Burned green and orange, framed by the coloured stone,
In which sad light a carved dolphin swam.
Above the antique mantel was displayed
As though a window gave upon the sylvan scene
The change of Philomel, by the barbarous kind
So rudely forced; yet there the nightingales
Filled all the desert with invincible voice
And still she cried, and still the world pursues,
"Jug Jug" to dirty ears.
And other withered stumps of time
Were told upon the walls; staring forms
Leamed out, leaning, hushing the room enclosed.

One might continue at length citing bits of descriptions
from Eliot's poems, and none of them essentially rural in
character, all of them reflecting some phase, however in-
directly, of urban life. The scenes of "Prufrock" and "Portrait of a Lady" are mostly drawing-room scenes. The scenes of the "Sweeney" poems are laid in taverns and cheap hotels, "Gerontion" a rented house, "Burbank" in decadent Venice, "A Cooking Egg" in a middle-class parlor.

Eliot confines his observation of people, typically enough, to the urbanite. He is never aware of any innate nobility of character beneath their dirt, nor that in them the "essential passions of the heart find a better soil" unless, indeed, these passions be of an evil or negative kind. Eliot as he goes about seems, rather, aware "of the damp souls of housemaids" or of the "smoke that rises from the pipes of lonely men in shirt-sleeves, leaning out of windows . . ." but never of the inner nobilities of the common people he meets. Indeed, the common people as central characters do not intrude themselves into his poems. There is the brief glimpse we get of the footman holding the second maid on his knees, in the ironic little poem, "Aunt Helen" and the justly famous conversation in the pub, recorded in the second part of "The Waste Land", and in the third part, the more detailed description of the typist and the house agent's clerk and that is about all
He notes:

The typist home at teatime, clears her
breakfast, lights
Her stove, and lays out food in tins.
Out of the window perilously spread
Her drying combinations touched by the
sun's last rays
On the divan are piled (at night her bed)
Stockings, slippers, camisoles, and stays.

But if his picture of the typist is unevoluted, lacking
in any trait which one would call noble, the picture he
gives us of the clerk is still more so:

He, the young man carbuncular, arrives,
A small house agent's clerk, with one bold
stare
One of the low on whom assurance sits
As a silk hat on a Bradford millionaire.

The clerk's actions, his motives for calling upon the
typist, epitomize all that is sordid and mean:

The time is now propitious, as he guesses,
The meal is ended, she is bored and tired,
Endeavours to engage her in caresses
Which still are unreproved, if undesired.
Flushed and excited he assaults at once;
Exploring hands encounter no defense;
His vanity requires no response,
And makes a welcome of indifference.

Bestows one final patronising kiss,
And greps his way, finding the stairs unlit.

Here we see a common, mean person, low in all of his dealings
and desires. The typist differs from the clerk only in degree,
not in kind. After the episode has run its course,

She turns and looks a moment in the glass,
Hardly aware of her departed lover;
Her brain allows one half-formed thought to pass:
"Well now that's done; and I'm glad it's over."
In the whole scene there is not one redeeming feature. It is born of squalor and filth, and it never rises above its essential baseness. The common people noticed by Eliot agree with Wordsworth's view only in the simplicity of their motives—not in the motives themselves: and the monotony of their circumscribed days, instead of ennobling them, destroys making them more vile.

But, as may be readily concluded from the few examples one is able to discover, the common people are not typical figures in Eliot's poems. The typical figure is a sophisticated, city-bred person of ease, if not affluent circumstances. He is usually a dilettantish, intellectual person—lady-or-gentleman-about-town, or people who contribute to his amusement, people who are very much under the stress of "social vanity" and who tend, as a rule, to communicate their "feelings and notions" in anything but "simple and unelaborated expressions"—in short, people who know something of literature, go to art galleries, attend the concerts, and patronize the opera. They are the people who "measure out their lives in coffee spoons". People whose days and nights are filled with the world's great, living things, but whose lives are uncreative and empty; people who have seen much, but not enough, and are cursed by the vision they either cannot, or will not see. Like the old man in "Gerontion", they are haunted by "thoughts of a dry brain in a dry season",
and wait aimlessly for their inevitable fate—to "stiffen in a rented house", or, like Apeneck Sweeney, they obliterate their days in drunkenness, lechery and debauchery. They are modern people in a modern scene:

Miss Nancy Ellicott smoked
And danced all the modern dances;
And her aunts were not quite sure how they felt about it.
But they knew that it was modern.

Miss Ellicott and her generation have forsaken alike
the disciplinarians of the past, "Matthew and Waldo, guardians of the faith", and "the army of unalterable law". Partly of
the world of Miss Ellicott, partly of the world of her aunts,
is the timid, vacillating Mr. Prufrock, who describes himself:

---a bold spot in the middle of my hair---
(They will say: "How his hair is growing thin!")
My morning coat, my collar mounting firmly to the chin,
My necktie rich and modest, but asserted by a simple pin---
(They will say: "but how his arms and legs are thin")

Hesitant, doubting, never quite of the faded intellectual modern world, yet as much a part of it as the wall paper,
the laughter among the teacups, Professor and Mrs. Channing-Cheata, or the nameless women who "come and go talking of Michaelangelo". Perhaps even the reason why this modern world is able to continue its appointed course, Prufrock acts his fugitive drama and accepts with resignation a fate which could belong only to himself. But of very
different stuff is Mr. Apollinax, the social lion, whose
laughter, upon the occasion of his visiting the United States
is likened to "an irresponsible foetus",

His laughter was submarine and profound
Like the old man of the sea's
Hidden under coral islands.

* * * *

I looked for the head of Mr. Apollinax
rolling on a chair
Or grinning over a screen
With seaweed in its hair.

And who left behind him the impression:

"He is a charming man"—"But after all
what did he mean?"—

* * * *

"There was something he said I might have
challenged."

Of interest, too, are the hangers-on the Sweeney-Prufrock-
Apollinax world. There is the Russian courtesan, Grishkin.

Mr. Eliot describes her:

Grishkin is nice; her Russian eye
Is underlined for emphasis;
Uncoated, her friendly bust
Gives promise of pneumatic bliss.

The crouched Brazilian jaguar
Compels the scampering marmoset
With subtle effluence of cat;
Grishkin has a maisonette;

The sleek Brazilian jaguar
Does not in its arboreal gloom
Distil so rank a feline smell
As Grishkin in a drawing-room.
Doris is of the same class: but is a trifle more domestic:

But Doris, towelled from the bath,
Enters padding on broad feet
Bringing Sal volatile
And a glass of brandy neat.

But mostly the minor figures in Mr. Eliot's poems are the merest of shadows, characterized, if at all by a phrase, or chance expression: a stray man in a brown suit is characterized in "Sweeney among the Nightingales" as the "silent vertebrate in brown", and the footman, albeit an eternal one, is summed up by Mr. Prufrock, in the remark, "holds my coat and snickers".

And this leads us to another position from which we may contrast Eliot's ideas and Wordsworth's. Neither Eliot's humble people, nor his great ones, seem to possess any nobility of soul, nor fine traits of character. Mr. Eliot's people are not only more complex and sophisticated than those of Wordsworth, but they are more vile. The nineteenth century, raising its hands in horror, would have asked of Mr. Eliot's people, granting that such people exist, "Why write about them?" In the poetry of the nineteenth century, from Wordsworth to Browning, the evil were punished, and the righteous man came at last into his bread; but in Mr. Eliot's poems this does not happen. The nineteenth century would fail to see that the fate of Prufrock and Sweeney is their sufficient punishment, and that a moral idea is vindicated in their sterility.
Mr. Eliot, however, is more interested in situations than in people; in spiritual attitudes which are typical of his generation than the people who compose it. He is not interested in the simple situations and rudimentary responses, as was Wordsworth, but rather the more complex, or at least more subtle ones. For this reason he never allows us to become greatly interested in his people as individuals, subdues his characterizations, and directs our attentions to the situations in which we find them. Thus we discover Prufrock, an elderly, hesitant gentleman, trying to work up nerve to propose to a charming and beautiful young lady. We learn almost nothing at all about the lady, and very little more about Prufrock. Our interest is centered in an impersonal sort of way upon Prufrock's inability to meet the situation, his lack of vitality, and his lame self-justification, when he finally admits his inability to cross the abstract line which separates him from the woman he desires.

And would it have been worth it, after all, After the cups, the marmalade, the tea, Among the porcelain, among some talk of you and me, Would it have been worth while To have bitten off the matter with a smile, To have squeezed the universe into a ball To roll it toward some overwhelming question, To say: "I am Lazarus, come from the dead, Come back to tell you all, I shall tell you all"— If one, settling a pillow by her head, Should say: "That is not what I meant at all; That is not it, at all."

Prufrock could not brave the possibility of a — "That is not
what I meant at all". A little sadly, a little bitterly, perhaps, he accepts his place in the lady's world.

No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be;
Am not attendant lord, one that will do
To swell a progress, start a scene or two,
Advise the prince; no doubt, an easy tool,
Dedential, glad to be of use,
Polite, cautious, and meticulous;
Full of high sentence, but a bit obtuse;
At times, indeed, almost ridiculous--
Almost, at times, the Fool.

He is a man, finished, finished and outside of all that is vital; a man who has truly seen the "moment of his greatness flicker", and in the midst of his serenity, accepts the fact with resignation.

In "Portrait of a Lady" Mr. Eliot directs our attention to another subtle situation, one fraught with overtones and innuendoes. In the poem a lady, no longer young is playing her trump card for the affections of a man who is apparently her junior. She is a proud and sophisticated lady, subtle, but none the less determined in her approach. The young man cannot live up to the emotional demands she puts upon him, nor can he get up the courage to openly reject her. The poem opens:

Among the smoke and fog of a December afternoon
You have the scene arrange itself--as it will seem to do--
With "I have saved this afternoon for you";
And four wax candles in the darkened room,
Four rings of light upon the ceiling overhead,
An atmosphere of Juliet's tomb
Prepared for all the things to be said, or left unsaid.
It is this atmosphere of candles and Juliet's tomb, which sets vibrating overtones of a lost and hopeless love, the key or pitch of the poem. The young man has probably been her lover, and, while he is fascinated by her, realizing the fineness of the tribute her offer constitutes, he realizes at the same time the impossibility of ever rising to what she expects of him. She opens the contest, which, about eventually must come/between them; but there is no direct allusion in her words, and he must, and does comprehend her meanings through implication.

"You do not know how much they mean to me, my friends, In a life composed so much, so much of odds and ends, [For indeed I do not love it ... you knew? You are not blind!] How keen you are!]
To find a friend who has these qualities, Who has, and gives th
Those qualities upon which friendship lives. How much it means that I say this to you—

The young man evades, politely, "takes the air in a tobacco trance"; at the same time he cannot give her up entirely, and Spring finds them still across the teacups, and the question still unanswered.

She has a bowl of lilacs in her room
And twists one in her fingers while she talks
"Ah, my friend, you do not know, you do not know
What life is, you should hold it in your hands";
(Slowly twisting the lilac stalks)
"You let it flow from you, you let it flow,
And youth is cruel and has no remorse
And smiles at situations which it cannot see."

The implications are not lost on him:

I smile, of course,
And go on drinking tea.
Finally in desperation she cries out:

You are invulnerable, you have no achilles' heel. You will go on, and when you have prevailed You can say: at this point many a one has failed. But what have I, but what have I my friend, To give you, what can you receive from me? Only the friendship and the sympathy Of one about to reach her journey's end.

But there is no response, and she goes on, lamely, I shall sit here serving tea to friends. . . ."

He flees:

I take my hat: how can I make cowardly amends For what she has said to me?

But the old fascination smolders, and it is not until the following autumn that things are finally brought to a head. She says,

"And so you are going abroad; and when will you return? But that's a useless question. You hardly know when you are coming back, You will find so much to learn."

Still, with dying hope, she risks one last attempt,

"I have been wondering frequently of late (But our beginnings never know our ends!) Why we have not developed into friends."

* * * *

"For everybody said so, all our friends, They all were so sure our feelings would relate So closely! I myself can hardly understand. We must leave it now to fate. You will write at any rate. Perhaps it is not too late. I shall sit here, serving tea to friends."

But he remains obdurate, and she realizes in a sudden burst of despair that her cause is lost; and that with him, somehow,
youth, and love, and romance—all that has been worth while
to her in the past—is departing also—and the strain breaks
with an emotional flood.

And I must borrow every changing shape
To find expression... dance, dance
Like a dancing bear,
Cry like a parrot, chatter like an ape.

But all the defeat is not on her side, nor all the victory
on his; he realizes that it is a defeat, which has destroyed
both the victor and the vanquished; and while he has escaped
from her physical presence, there is that about her which
shall go with him many days, and return again and again, in
each succeeding evil hour.

Well! and what if she should die some afternoon,
Afternoon gray and smoky, evening yellow and rose;
Should die and leave me sitting pen in hand
With the smoke coming down above the housetops;
Doubtful, for a while
Not knowing what to feel or if I understand,
Or whether wise or foolish, tardy or too soon... Would she not have the advantage, after all?

And the answer is that she would. She has closed the door
upon her life at last, and with the closing of the door has
some peace, but he can find no peace, nor will he ever find
peace, until like her, he has closed the door upon both
struggle and desire. She, too, has the memory of a noble
struggle and a gallant loss, and above all, the memory of a
love that was sincere, even though, analyzed coldly, a love
which would have been sterile and abnormal; he has only the
memory of cowardise, of a sickly and uninspired sin. He will
be haunted by the values he has rejected and the faith he had
despoiled.

And this brings us to another way in which Eliot departs
from the nineteenth century tradition: the particular manner
in which he employs the everyday objects and the everyday
happenings. Wordsworth used common things, and simple,
everyday happenings, to emphasize the spiritual intensity of
his characters, to ennoble and elevate the minds of his
readers. Eliot uses his everyday happenings to show man's
depravity, to point out the need of an intense spiritual
rebirth, and to emphasize the fact that the civilization in
which man finds himself is conducive to destruction and
spiritual ruin. Wordsworth was the prophet of a new order:
the great and lasting beauty of common things; Eliot is a
Jeremiah, standing at the parting of the ways, warning his
generation that the path it has chosen can lead only to
destruction and eternal night. Wordsworth had something
creative and constructive to offer the world; the peculiar
value of Eliot lies in his attempt to bring his generation
to the need of constructive and creative forces in modern
civilization by pointing out their absence. Whether he is
walking the street at night, sitting in the drawing-room of
Mrs. Channing-Cheata, or giving himself up to the liturgical
rhythms of the poems succeeding The Waste Land, he is always
conscious that our civilization is squalid, and that our
intellectual life is in decay.

We are the hollow men
We are the stuffed men
Leaning together
Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!
Our dried voices, when
We whisper together
Are quiet and meaningless
As wind in dry grasses
Or rats' feet over broken glass
In our dry cellar.

He observes, and what object, or scene could be more common,
or uninspiring:

Remark the cat which flattens itself in the gutter,
Slips out its tongue
And devours a morsel of rancid butter

Of the old days on the Thames he remarks,

The river bears no empty bottles, sandwich papers,
Silk handkerchiefs, cardboard boxes, cigarette ends
Or other testimony of summer nights.

And again of the same river,

A rat crept softly through the vegetation
Dragging its slimy belly on the bank
While I was fishing in the dull canal
On a winter evening behind the gas house.

Of the London streets he notes:

And now a gusty shower wraps
The grimy scraps
Of withered leaves about your feet
And newspapers from vacant lots;
The showers beat
On broken blinds and chimney-pots,
And at the corner of the street
A lonely cab-horse steams and stamps.

Uninspiring and sordid scenes, utterly without the deceptive
moonlight of Wordsworth's metaphysics. He is no more sanguine
about people. There is always something sordid and evil
about them:

You tossed a blanket from the bed,
You lay upon your back and waited;
You dozed, and watched the night revealing
A thousand sordid images
Of which your soul constituted;

Or,

The epileptic on the bed
Curves backward, clutching at her sides.

The ladies of the corridor
Find themselves involved, disgraced,
Call witness to their principles
And deprecate the lack of taste.

Observing that hysteria
Might easily be misunderstood;
Mrs. Turner intimates
It does the house no sort of good.

Or,

The person in the Spanish cape
Tries to sit on Sweeney's knees

Slips and pulls the table cloth
Overturns a coffee-slop
Reorganized upon the floor
She yawns and draws a stocking up;

Thus we see that in the common scenes, and in the common actions of everyday Mr. Eliot discovers nothing which reveals the workings of God, or the finer reaches of the human soul. About such scenes there is no mystery, no transcendent quality. There is nothing but squalor which causes festering in the human soul, or sets up at worst, the dry-rot of indifference, in which the night reveals "a thousand sordid images of which the soul is made". Even an elaborate drawing-room scene is apt to leave in his mind but the memory of "a slice of lemon,
Any flies we may
from this we may
the country. To those found in the city, therefore, have, of course, have stumbled from
rules. Rules material objects, or causes, have stumbled from
an example to accentuate man's barriers, and spiritual
sense to stress man's spiritual existence. Knows these them
what market used material objects and commonplace
in them the game of organizational existence and deep, the
number of the rich, unique, any spatially abstracted, the time
it is not much inferior, and increased at ticking in either the
of the purposes, and organized, the organized, the.

Example—The simple musa had given place in Achebe's poetic
and the background is essentially urban. Worldwides, people
approach as an abstraction as it is possible for a poet to be,
approach to the poetry is most钴en personal, whereas Achebe's
does not represent a poet to the ordinary reader. The background
of a community, or aspect of it, in literature, to make the
reader, in order, the poetry of Achebe's one needs the instruction
and the psychology of Achebe's
It is not a very different aspect, that the poetry of Achebe's
in general appearance presents
the world, and perhaps and the reader, in the sense of Achebe's
does not mean to draw a comparison. The reader of Achebe's
Thus we see, that upon the four general points upon which
and thereupon.
conclude that there is even a greater contrast between Eliot's poetry and Wordsworth's than there is between their theories of poetry.

III ELIOT'S USE OF COMMON SPEECH

The divergence between Eliot and Wordsworth, in the use of common speech, occurs not so much in theory as in its adaptation. Both Eliot and Wordsworth wished to revivify the poetic vocabulary, by making it correspond more nearly than previous poets had been in the habit of making it correspond to the actual practices of everyday speech. Wordsworth believed that common speech was a "far more philosophical language than that usually substituted for it by the poets", but he believed, at the same time, in purging it of the more common defects, or as he put it, "defects". Eliot makes no such reservation, and his program for revivification of the poetic vocabulary and diction may be considered under the following topics: (1) He introduces the conversational tone into poetry, (2) he makes use of the corrupted jargon of the city dwellers in the slums, (3) he employs from time to time the sophisticated jargon of the educated urbanite, (4) he makes some progress in the use of scientific words and phrases,
(5) he makes use, without disguise, of the words for the common objects which our civilization has produced. But Eliot, at the same time is aware that all poetry does not necessarily have to be written in the language of common speech, and, consequently, all of his poems do not hold fast to the points listed above, although, from poem to poem, one may find examples of some, or all, of these points.

While Wordsworth took the use of common speech in his poetry as an ideal toward which to strive, and while in certain poems he made a great deal of progress in its use, he never quite succeeded in catching the conversational tone, which was employed with effect by the Metaphysical poets from Donne to Cowley, and which Eliot has reintroduced into our poetry. Even the opening lines of "The Tables Turned", which is more conversational than most of Wordsworth's attempts manage to be, is hardly on the level with a genuine conversational tone; certainly the lines which follow up are not:

Up! Up! my Friend, and quit your books
Or surely you'll grow double.

The same failure may be noted in these lines from "We are Seven":

I met a little cottage Girl:
She was eight years old, she said;
Her hair was thick with many a curl
That clustered round her head.
She had a rustic, woodland air,
And she was wildly clad;
Her eyes were fair, and very fair;
--Her beauty made me glad.

Any of the words used in the last quotation might have been used in an ordinary conversation, but hardly in their present combination. In ordinary conversation the little girl might have been noted, but hardly as a "cottage girl" and her hair might have been marked, but it would hardly have been designated as "thick with many a curl", nor would it have been said that these same curls "clustered round her head". It is reasonably certain, too, that she would not have had a "rustic, woodland air", and even if she was dressed rather strangely, it is also reasonably certain that she would not have been "wildly clad", except in a slangy sense, and we may be reasonably sure that Wordsworth, from the seriousness of the poem, did not mean to employ slang. Even when Wordsworth is quoting direct speech he still insists upon a purely poetical combination of words:

"How tell me, had you rather be",
I said, and took him by the arm,
"On Kive's smooth shore, by the green sea,
Or here at Liswyn farm?"

This quotation from "Anecdote for Fathers" seems a good example. The same ideas might be expressed in most any chance conversation, but few if any would have contained the poetical word-combinations of "green sea" and "smooth shore".
When we turn to Eliot, we see how deftly the conversational tone is managed:

And would it have been worth it, after all,
After the cups, the marmalade, the tea,
Among the porcelain, among some talk of you and me,
Would it have been worth while
To have bitten off the matter with a smile...

The feeling the passage conveys is decidedly poetic, but phrase by phrase it might be found in any one of a dozen conversations. Eliot manages to maintain this tone even when the matter of the passage is somewhat poetic, as in the opening lines from "Portrait of a Lady":

Among the smoke and fog of a December afternoon
You have the scene arrange itself—as it will seem to do—
With "I have saved this afternoon for you";
And four wax candles in the darkened room,
Four rings of light upon the ceiling overhead,
An atmosphere of Juliet's tomb
Prepared for all the things to be said, or left unsaid.

The conversational tone here even survives the decidedly poetic couplet

And four wax candles in the darkened room,
Four rings of light upon the ceiling overhead,...

which fit into the passage as vivid observations of a room, rather than overlaid ornament, as the phrases of Wordsworth often seem to do. Even in a more restricted verse form, Eliot's tone often appears conversational:

The person in the Spanish cape
Tries to sit on Sweeney's knees
Slips and pulls the table cloth
Overturns a coffeesup,
Reorganized upon the floor
She yawns and draws a stocking up;
We are not surprised, therefore, to find Eliot, indirectly recorded conversation, sticking to the tone with the same ruthless fidelity:

"My nerves are bad to-night. Yes, bad. Stay with me."
"Speak to me. Why do you not speak? Speak."
"What are you thinking of?"

#2

Probably Eliot's greatest fidelity to the tone of common speech occurs in his reproduction of the language of the common people. Eliot, when he uses the language of everyday, does not purge it of its defects, its vulgarisms, and its bad grammar, as Wordsworth did. This arises partly from Eliot's desire to show that the people about whom he writes, suffering from the deadening influences of our urban civilization, and partly from his desire to reproduce actual conversation. Eliot in his use of language is interested in showing the reader man's depravity and spiritual decay, and this is no less true of the drawing-room than of the pub:

The hot water at ten.
And if it rains a closed ear at four.
And we shall play a game of shass,
Pressing lidless eyes and waiting for a knock upon the door.

When Lil's husband got denobbed, I said--
I didn't mince words, I said to her myself,
HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME
Now Albert's coming back, make yourself a bit smart.
He'll want to know what you done with that money he gave you
To get yourself some teeth. He did, I was there.
You have them all out, Lil, and get a nice set,
He said, I swear, I can't bear to look at you.
And no more can I, I said, and think of poor
Albert,
He's been in the army four years, he want a good
time,
And if you don't give it him, there's others will,
I said.
O is there, she said. Something o'that, I said.
Then I'll know who to thank, she said, and give
me a straight look
HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME
If you don't like it you can get on with it, I said.
Others can pick and choose if you can't.
But if Albert makes off, it won't be for lack of
telling
You ought to be ashamed to look so antique.
(And her only thirty-one).
I can't help it, she said, pulling a long face,
It's them pills I took to bring it off, she said.
(She's had five already, and nearly died of young
George).
The chemist said it would be all right, but I've
never been the same.
You are a proper fool, I said.
Well, if Albert don't leave you alone, there it
is I said,
What you get married for if you don't want
children?
HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME
Well, that Sunday Albert was home, they had a
hot gammon,
And they asked me in to dinner to get the beauty
of it hot--
HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME
HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME
Goodnight.
Ta Ta. Goodnight, Goodnight.

Good night, ladies, good night, sweet ladies,
good night, good night.
3

The third proposition we have already illustrated in other connections, namely, our discussion of "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" and "Portrait of a Lady". Mr. Eliot, particularly apt in catching and setting down such conversational jargon as "How you digress", "And so you are going abroad, and when will you return", "I have saved this afternoon for you", "So intimate, this Chopin", "Perhaps you could write me", "There was something he said I might have challenged", and "He is a charming man!"—polite phrases, to be sure, cultivated phrases, but empty and banal, especially when out of their settings. In their settings they take on a certain validity, even convey at times a certain tragic restraint, as "I shall sit here, serving tea to friends", the refrain employed with telling effect in "Portrait of a Lady", and we accept them without protest; but essentially they spring from a sterility and a meanness of soul, and the people who utter them differ only in externals, not in kind, from the people who clutter the pubs.

4

Eliot's slight use of scientific terminology is an innovation which Wordsworth foresew, but which few of the poets of the nineteenth century availed themselves of with
much effectiveness. "The remotest discoveries of the Chemist, the Botanist, or Mineralogist, will be as proper objects of the Poet's art as any upon which it can be employed, if the time should ever come when these things shall be familiar to us". 41 The time has indeed come when the objects of science are familiar to us, and have been familiar to us for a long time, but scarcely until Eliot used them, have they formed any very effective part of the poetical vocabulary. When they have found their way into poetry at all, they have given the impression of having been forced in to the lines by some artificial process, and unlike the other words, have not given the impression of being indigenous to them. In a certain sense Mr. Eliot does not escape self-consciousness in his use of scientific terms, but, as a good deal of self-consciousness is characteristic of Eliot's poetic style, the scientific terminology escapes the adverse notice it might otherwise attract.

Polyphilologenitive
The Sapient subtlers of the lord
Drift across the window pains.

Or the less obtrusive use of "etherised", in the often-quoted lines of "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"

Let us go then, you and I
When the evening is spread out against the sky
Like a patient etherised upon a table"

more desired.

The stage of alteration in which one becomes
unfortunately unable to respond to the
stage of alteration in which one becomes
unfortunately unable to respond to the
stage of alteration in which one becomes
unfortunately unable to respond to the

At least that which has not made extensive use of

Like a flash of lightning

Turn round from the desk when the human eye

when the eyes and back

modern urban life

shorter narratives and fragments of speech hysteria finds its

in the present tense of verbalisation an outcome of

honesty more likely to go to material life and legend,

value lies. The poise, such as temperament, restless, and

false things of our entitiation that Mr. Hotté oh other

and figures expressing the more commonplace and stereotyped

If it is however, in the deepest sense to poise uses the words

If it is however, in the deepest sense to poise uses the words

Indeed by or having a direct sociological extension.

emotional and prehistoric, "choly" and "choly",

"profound silence", "cruel and angry", "pulsating",

"vexed", "profound silence", "cruel and angry", "pulsating",

"foresee", "see the world". "Fearful pronouncement".

boredom in such phrases as "true syntheses", "true syntheses",

always easily comprehended type of expression. The poems

refer in the differentiation of art's indistinguishable

In both cases the semantic to lexicon rather tend to lose

-69-
Or,

I shall not want Capital in Heaven
   For I shall meet Sir Alfred Mond;
We two shall lie together, rapt
   In a five percent Exchequer Bond

And

"The bed is open; the tooth-brush hangs on
   the wall,
Put your shoes at the door, sleep, prepare
   for life."

The skill and neatness with which Mr. Eliot weaves into
his poetry the banalities of the urban scene, may be
hinted at, if not illustrated in the following passage:

   You will see me any morning in the park
Reading the comics and the sporting page.
   Particularly I remark
And English countess goes upon the stage.
A Greek was murdered at a Polish dance,
   Another bank defaulter has confessed.
I keep my countenance,
   I remain self-possessed
Except when a street piano, mechanical and tired
   Reiterates some worn-out common song
With the smell of hyacinths across the garden
   Recalling things that other people have desired.

And,

Mr. Eugides, the Smyrna merchant
Unshaven, with a pocket full of currants
   C. i. Lend: documents at sight,
   Asked me in demotic French
To luncheon at the Cannon Street Hotel
   Followed by a weekend at the Metropole.

And,

But at my back, from time to time I hear
The sound of horns and motors, which shall bring
Sweeney to Mrs. Porter in the spring.
   Oh the moon shone bright on Mrs. Porter
And on her daughter
   They wash their feet in soda water.
One cannot imagine Wordsworth, even with his passion for common things and common speech, mentioning a "street piano", a "bank defaulter" the "sound of horns and motors" or the fact that Mrs. Porter and daughter use soda water as a foot bath as Eliot has done. Eliot is not sentimental in his treatment of People and scenes, and this, most of the poets of the nineteenth century, with the possible exception of Browning, certainly were. Mr. Eliot observes in his essay "The Metaphysical Poets": "The sentimental age began early in the eighteenth century, and continued. The poets revolted against the satiesticative, the descriptive; they thought and felt by fits, unbalanced; they reflected." In one or two passages of Shelley's *Triumph of Life*, in the second *Hyperion*, there are traces of a struggle toward unification of sensibility. But Keats and Shelley died, and Tennyson and Browning ruminated." There is nothing which is sentimental about Mr. Eliot, at least up until the year 1922, the publication date of "The Waste Land", and this is a key, as much as any other, to an understanding of his use of modern life in his poems. He notes of Mr. Eugeides, the Smyrna merchant, that he is unshaven, and that his pockets are filled with currants; he does not become sentimental over Mr. Eugeides, as Wordsworth might have done. The man's character is reflected in the graphic business phrase, "c.i. f. London: documents at sight". He does not pity Mr. Eugeides, nor enter into any
any lengthy explanation why that unfortunate gentleman is now, and probably always will remain, unshaven. Mr. Eugene passes us casually and without comment, and any disgust the man inspires in us is of the type which arises from a chance observation in a street; Mr. Elliot does not say, "Behold Mr. Eugene and be appalled," we are appalled without his calling attention directly to the fact that we must be.

Akin to Elliot's lack of sentimentality in dealing with characters and situations in his poems, is his tendency to use a type of language which Wordsworth would not approve of. He often makes use of such artificial figures of speech and many complex words and grammatical structures:

Even the Abstract Entities
Circumambulate her firm;

or,

A lustrless protrusive eye
Stains from the protozoe slime
At a perspective of Canaletto.

or,

The abate presbyters approach
The avenue of penitence;
The young are red and pustular
Clutching picaulative pens.

43. Mr. Elliot uses the following terms, which, it seems to
Under the penitential gates
Sustained by staring Seraphim
Where the souls of the devout
Burn invisible and dim.

Along the garden-wall the bees
With hairy bellies pass between
The staminate and pistilate
Blest office of the epigone.

Thus, in the use of such words as "circumambulate", "protozoic"
"pisculative", and "pastular", and in the involved, and not
exactly clear, "the sable presbyters approach the avenue of
penitence", Mr. Eliot cuts himself off from the strict
workings of Wordsworth's theory of poetic language; and this,
together with his attitude toward form, separates Eliot,
in practice as well as in theory, from the poetic tradition
of Wordsworth.

Thus we see, that Eliot has followed Wordsworth's theory
of common speech in the main, the uses to which he has put it,
partly because of the change due to the natural growth of
the language, and partly because of the differences in en-
vironment which Eliot's poems reflect, brings out a considerably

me could never have been used by a poet in the nineteenth
century: "one-night cheap hotels", "pools that stand in drains"
"sandust restaurants with oyster shells", "coffee spoons",
"lonely men in shirt-sleeves", "jacksifes upward", "a wicked
pack of cards", "uncorrected", "food in tins", "Drying com-
binations. These phrases reflect intimately our own times,
and would have struck the older poets as unsuitable for poetic
use.
different effect, and the ordinary speech of Eliot, differs very widely from the ordinary speech recorded in the poems of Wordsworth. Eliot, too, has been much more successful in introducing the conversational tone into his poetry, and sustaining it throughout long passages, and even poems. But Eliot, unlike Wordsworth, does not believe that poetry of necessity, has to follow the language of common speech in every particular, and consequently, uses from time to time, complex words upon which Wordsworth would have frowned.

CONCLUSION

As we have seen from a comparison of the theories of poetry set forth by Eliot and Wordsworth there are decided differences, and as we have seen from a comparison of their poetry in chapters two and three, these differences in theory have resulted in radical differences in their poetry. Wordsworth's approach to poetry is mainly personal. Wordsworth as a poet is a "man speaking to men". Eliot holds an "impersonal theory of poetry" and in the working out of his poems he has attempted to be as impersonal as possible. The background in the poetry of Eliot has shifted from the countryside background of Wordsworth to the typically city background of our modern urban civilization. Eliot, too, has
forsaken the theory that the essential passions of the heart have found a richer ground in the common man, and finds in his typically urban character the germs of spiritual decay and ruin. Eliot finds the modern scene banal, sordid, deadening, lacking the fruitful waters of life. Wordsworth found in the common man and nature examples of spiritual elevation, and man in his contacts with nature ennobled, and rising to clearer spiritual conceptions than men who lived in cities. In general, Wordsworth’s poems are simple in their language, and are capable of being understood by the common reader without commentary. Eliot’s poems are almost incapable of being understood by the ordinary reader without the notes of a literary specialist, and above all a specialist upon Eliot himself.

If we agree that Wordsworth set the tradition of a hundred years of English poetry, or at least the dominant tradition of English poetry, and that English poetry can be judged by Wordsworth’s canons and practices, the differences between the poetry of Wordsworth and Eliot appear great enough to assume that Eliot is a poet in revolt against those tendencies in the nineteenth century to which Wordsworth gave an impetus. A revolt in poetry seems to be a radical and complete departure from the dominant tradition of the poet’s time, or one which immediately preceded his own.
If, then, we agree that Wordsworth was in revolt against the neo-classicism of the eighteenth century, on the grounds of his theory and practices differing from the neo-classic poets, we must, on the strength of Eliot's differences, concede that he is in revolt against the Wordsworthian tendencies in nineteenth century poetry.
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